



BLM News

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WINNEMUCCA FIELD OFFICE, 5100 EAST WINNEMUCCA BLVD., WINNEMUCCA, NV 89445-2921

WFO-2006-40

RELEASE DATE: August 18, 2006

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BLM PROPOSES FIREBREAKS TO REDUCE RISK OF LARGE WILDFIRES ALONG HUMBOLDT-ELKO COUNTY LINE

August 18, 2006 – Winnemucca, Nev. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Winnemucca Field Office has completed the Little Owyhee Roads Herbicide Treatment Environmental Assessment (EA) and made it available for public review and comment. The EA can be reviewed online at <http://www.nv.blm.gov/Winnemucca/NEPA/default.htm> or in hard copy at the BLM Winnemucca Field Office. Hard copies are also available upon request.

The BLM proposes to use a BLM-approved herbicide to treat big sagebrush along roadsides in the Little Owyhee Allotment for fuels reduction and fire suppression purposes. The Little Owyhee Allotment is located on both sides of the Elko-Humboldt County line about 75 miles northeast of Winnemucca. The allotment contains some of the largest, unbroken, even-aged sagebrush stands in Nevada. Fire has been aggressively suppressed within these allotments for over 30 years which has allowed the sagebrush to grow large and to dominate the landscape with few naturally occurring "mosaics." Mosaics are areas where vegetative cover varies in density, and includes a diversity of species in various age groups and sizes. In general, vegetative mosaics tend to better resist wildfire than dense, even-aged vegetative stands; and they provide the varied habitat required by many animal species.

The nearly continuous, even-aged stand of sagebrush in the Little Owyhee Allotment would enable wildfires to burn unchecked across very large areas, which in turn would eliminate valuable wildlife habitat. By treating the sagebrush along the edges of existing roads, BLM hopes to reduce the chance that a wildfire could spread uncontrolled and grow to catastrophic size. Treating the edges of the roads would break up fuel continuity and reduce overall fuel loading in specific areas, creating breaks in the vegetation that could slow or stop an advancing wildfire.

The BLM requests comments on this proposal by the close of business September 1, 2006. Written comments should be directed to Angie Messmer, fire ecologist, BLM Winnemucca Field Office, 5100 E. Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca NV 89445-2921. Comments may also be submitted by email to NV_WFO_Webmail@nv.blm.gov. Email messages should include "Little Owyhee Roads Herbicide Treatment" in the subject line. Further information on the project is available by contacting Messmer by email at angela_messmer@nv.blm.gov or by phone at (775) 623-1500.

Commenters wishing to have their names or addresses withheld from public view or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act must request this prominently at the beginning of their comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowable by law. Anonymity is not allowed for submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses.